



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fifty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1232nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 August 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BANTON

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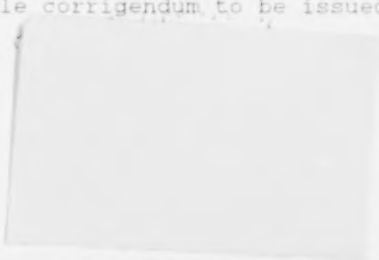
Twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth periodic reports of Norway

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 5) (continued)

Twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth periodic reports of Norway
(CERD/C/281/Add.2 and CERD/C/320/Add.1; HRI/CORE/1/Add.6)

1. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Committee had before it not only the twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of Norway, submitted in a single document (CERD/C/281/Add.2), but also the State party's fourteenth periodic report (CERD/C/320/Add.1).
2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Wille, Ms. Bakken and Ms. Kolshus (Norway) took places at the Committee table.
3. Mr. WILLE (Norway), presenting his country's twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth periodic reports, said that reporting under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as under the other principal human rights instruments, constituted an essential element in the international system established to monitor States parties' implementation of their human rights obligations.
4. His delegation appreciated the Committee's willingness also to consider the fourteenth periodic report of Norway, which contained an update on the latest developments in the country, in particular concerning the multicultural character of Norway and the challenges posed by immigration, issues which were addressed in the Government's White Paper on that subject. In addition, the Government had recently established, as planned, a working group consisting of representatives of organizations working against racism and racial discrimination (para. 9), with the mandate of proposing measures to improve the legal aid available to victims of racial discrimination. The working group was chaired by the Chairman of the Liaison Committee between Immigrants and the Norwegian Authorities.
5. His Government had consulted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regarding the content of the twelfth and thirteenth reports before submitting them to the Committee and had reproduced their comments in annex. Owing to lack of time, it had not been possible to hold the usual consultations before the submission of the fourteenth report, but that was an exception. As indicated in document CERD/C/281/Add.2, the Government would endeavour to improve the dialogue with NGOs and governmental advisory bodies when elaborating future reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
6. Mr. RECHETOV, Rapporteur for Norway, said that he would initially confine his comments to Norway's twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports, the fourteenth report not having reached him before the current meeting. In his view, the reports highlighted the need to pursue the dialogue between the Norwegian authorities and the Committee, and also to improve cooperation with NGOs. Such cooperation was particularly important in view of the fact that NGOs provided legal aid for victims of racial discrimination and played a decisive role in areas concerning human rights in Norway.

7. During the consideration of Norway's tenth and eleventh reports, in March 1994, the Committee had identified three main subjects of concern: the lack of information on the status of the Convention in domestic law, the inadequacy of data on the demographic composition of the population and the imprecision of information about the judicial and administrative procedures designed to protect victims of racial discrimination. Despite the statement in paragraph 2 of the report that account had been taken of the Committee's suggestions and recommendations, the replies to the questions raised were often incomplete.

8. Concerning the status of the Convention, he noted that the integration of the instrument into domestic law was a problem because of the nature of the Norwegian legal system. To be sure, reference was made in paragraph 4 of the report to a revision of the Constitution that would be followed by an Act incorporating certain international human rights conventions into Norwegian legislation, but those international conventions were not specified. Both the Human Rights Committee in 1993 and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1994 had expressed regret that the Norwegian Government had not incorporated the provisions of the Covenant and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Norwegian legislation. Was the Norwegian Government proposing to integrate the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into domestic law?

9. Regarding the demographic composition of the population, the report presented quite complete data. However, it would be useful to know precisely what was meant by the term "established minority group". The report stated that the Sami population was estimated at between 30,000 and 40,000, but that the results of any census would depend on the operational definition of Sami - that definition currently being based on a combination of linguistic and subjective criteria (para. 7), which seemed to be an acceptable method. For greater clarity, it would have been as well to indicate in the report whether nationals of other Scandinavian countries had the same rights as Norwegians.

10. Concerning the measures adopted to combat racism and xenophobia, the Norwegian Government had come to the conclusion that, given the complexity of those phenomena, it was important to broaden the definition of racism and discrimination to include not only isolated cases of direct discrimination and racism, but also processes that led to the marginalization of persons of immigrant origin, for example, seemingly neutral policies and practices by all levels of central and local authorities and all types of private enterprise having that same effect (para. 20). There could be no doubt that the implementation of seemingly neutral policies sometimes had adverse consequences for indigenous people, minorities and immigrants. Among the many initiatives taken by the Norwegian Government, reference should be made to the Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Ethnic Discrimination and to the Brumunddal Plan of Action to Tackle Acute Situations of Racial Violence and Harassment in a Local Community. The public authorities and local administrations had the task of gradually changing attitudes and eliminating prejudices and racist or xenophobic behaviour. The report mentioned several positive results recorded with the Brumunddal Plan of Action (para. 39), although it failed to provide supporting data; those results, moreover, seemed to be contradicted by a quite recent study which, according to paragraph 44, had shown that more than a quarter of the electorate were opposed to

immigration. The report drew attention to the existence of a number of anti-immigrant or neo-Nazi organizations (para. 46), but neglected to mention what measures had been taken to combat them. NGOs, in particular the Anti-Racist Centre, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees referred to cases of unjustified deportations of foreign students or refoulement of foreign minors who had requested asylum and whose families had not even been informed of the situation. Thus, between 1990 and 1996 the authorities had rejected most of the 1,192 asylum requests from minors wishing to join relatives in Norway. The delegation could perhaps convey to the relevant authorities the Committee's concerns in that regard.

11. The second part of the report contained information relating to articles 2 to 7 that was not always very precise. Action taken by the public authorities within the police (para. 55), prisons (paras. 58 and 59) and the armed forces (paras. 60-64), as well as in schools (paras. 65-70), evidenced a determination to combat racial discrimination. The Liaison Committee between Immigrants and the Norwegian Authorities, created in 1984, had established a dialogue between immigrants, ministries and political parties.

12. The report provided information on the measures taken pursuant to article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention to support the culture, language, and way of life of the Sami people. The Norwegian Government had rightly not confined itself to applying a non-discrimination policy but had taken positive measures with respect to the Sami. The Norwegian Government had a well-established reputation of liberalism. However, it would be useful if it could indicate to the Committee the number of Sami in higher education and in the Norwegian Parliament, and not merely reply, as the representative of another Scandinavian country had done, that such information could not be provided since it was impossible to differentiate the Sami from nationals. The report stated (para. 96) that the Sami Assembly "should carry substantial weight in Sami political matters". How was that statement to be interpreted? It would be interesting to know whether the Sami language could be used in the Norwegian administrative tribunals. Also, was it true that Sami language courses could be organized for a minimum of four persons?

13. It was regrettable that the arrangements made by the Norwegian Government to preserve the language, culture and way of life of the Sami should be used by the extreme right. The newspaper Le Monde had reported on 12 August that the Progress Party, which had presented candidates for the parliamentary elections, claimed that the Sami were enjoying broad government support to the detriment of the Norwegian population. That claim was all the more serious in view of the likelihood that the Party would win up to 20 per cent of the votes.

14. The information given in the report on article 4 was very interesting. Paragraph 117, for example, referred to a survey initiated by the Director-General of Public Prosecutions following allegations that the police had failed to institute criminal proceedings even in cases of obvious violation of sections 135 (a) and 349 (a) of the Penal Code. The following paragraph was also noteworthy for its acknowledgement that the reduction in the number of complaints regarding racially-motivated crimes might not be due to a real reduction in such crimes and could reflect a lack of confidence

among complainants in the ability of the police to investigate the cases properly. According to some NGOs, the second hypothesis was the correct one.

15. The following paragraphs gave several examples of cases illustrating the need to keep a close watch on the activities of racist organizations. Those using the airwaves to express their views required particular watchfulness since, with very modest means, they could have very prejudicial effects. The same watchfulness was needed for both radio and television (paras. 126 et seq.).

16. The reason given in paragraph 130 to explain why the Norwegian authorities did not have a complete list of organizations promoting racial discrimination seemed rather weak considering how important it was to take measures against such organizations. As in other respects, Norwegian society was shared between protecting freedom of expression and the need to combat racism. When freedom of speech was used to incite hatred between communities, however, it clearly served criminal ends and sanctions were required under both domestic and international law.

17. With regard to paragraph 136, the Committee's main concern was not so much to have statistics as to be assured that efforts were being made to enable ethnic minorities to participate in activities affecting the city, in particular those of the police and the justice system. It was thus gratifying to note from paragraph 141 that some immigrants were entitled to vote or to stand for election at the local level. Since it had close contacts with the Baltic countries, Norway could perhaps encourage them to grant the same right to the Russian minorities who had been living there for so long.

18. The information given in the report tallied with that provided by NGOs concerned with the situation of immigrants and minorities in terms of social services and employment. However, paragraphs 147 and 148 were confusing since it was stated, on the one hand, that immigrants could follow vocational training courses arranged by the Labour Market Service and, on the other, that their skills were often under-utilized. He would like to know whether that meant that the Labour Market Service only offered jobs requiring few qualifications. It would be a pity if Norway were to deprive itself of the skills of highly qualified people.

19. He noted the information given in various parts of the report on the Sami population and other minorities. Norway was to be commended for the great financial effort it was making to ensure that those people were integrated into society, if they so wished, without giving up their cultural and linguistic identity. Since land could be an important element of a minority's identity, the Committee would certainly welcome fuller information about the Sami who had brought a complaint before the European Commission of Human Rights because their exclusive right to keep reindeer in the Neiden district had not been respected, but whose case had been dismissed (para. 180). He also wished to raise the question of the compensation that would be due to them, under article 6 of the Convention, if their complaint was justified, and asked whether the Norwegian delegation could give more detail about the matter.

20. The information provided on education and teaching was of considerable interest. He would like to know whether the history of each minority was taught within the syllabuses referred to in paragraph 184 and what sources were used for that purpose.

21. Lastly, noting that sporting activities, as part of a people's culture, generated emotions that were sometimes difficult to control, he referred to a criminal case brought to court after racist incidents in a stadium during a match between a black African team and a Norwegian team. That case had prompted a courageous and praiseworthy examination of the very concept, scope and limits of racial discrimination.

22. Mr. WOLFRUM said that he wished to focus mainly on the thirteenth report. The fact that NGOs had been quite closely involved in the preparation of that document was to be commended, but he wished to emphasize that the drafting of the report was nevertheless the exclusive responsibility of the Government.

23. The "linguistic and subjective criteria" mentioned in paragraph 7 for determining who was Sami left him perplexed, especially as, according to paragraph 99, the Sami language had been somewhat neglected. The case of the Finno-ethnic minority population, mentioned in paragraph 9, raised similar doubts because very few of its members still spoke Finnish, according to paragraph 102. He would welcome clarification from the delegation on that point. Another matter of concern was the access of the Sami population to higher education, on which there seemed to be a contradiction regarding the question of quotas between paragraph 17 of the fourteenth report and paragraph 174 of the thirteenth report.

24. With regard to the Sami Assembly, referred to in paragraphs 91 et seq., he asked whether the Assembly also had administrative functions, as would appear from paragraph 94, what powers and functions were attributed to it, who elected its members and who could be elected to it, how many members it had, how it was financed and since when it had been functioning.

25. Further to what Mr. Rechetov had said about anti-immigrant organizations, he too would like to know why such organizations were not prohibited, as required by article 4 (b) of the Convention, and how they had managed to obtain permission to broadcast their views.

26. Paragraphs 115 and 116 showed that the provisions of the Penal Code, of which one article had been duly amended, were consistent with the principles set forth in article 4 (a) and (b) of the Convention. He was surprised to read in paragraph 117, however, that very few racially-motivated crimes were reported, and requested the Norwegian delegation to comment on that issue.

27. A very positive development, concerning the pluri-ethnic composition of juries, was described in paragraph 135. However, given what was said in paragraphs 142 and 150, he wondered whether the principle of non-discrimination was being effectively applied in all spheres and whether, for example, the amendment of the Working Environment Act had actually prohibited discrimination in the field of employment.

28. Regarding education in Norway, where the establishment of private school's hardly posed any problem, he would like to know whether it was true that the plan to create an Islamic school had been rejected by the competent authorities on the ground that the creation of such an institution would lead to segregation. That argument had some validity - and, in its general recommendation XIX, the Committee itself envisaged such a possibility - but it would be interesting to know whether that was the only one presented by the Ministry of Education and in what terms it had done so. In any event, teaching minorities their own language was to his mind a good thing, but he warned against teaching of the minority language alone, as advocated by some NGOs, since that could marginalize those who spoke that language to the exclusion of any other language.

29. Mr. SHERIFIS, noting from paragraph 5 of the report that Norway had until recently been a largely homogeneous society, both ethnically and linguistically, and that the vast majority of the population was of Norwegian origin, said that it would be useful to the Committee to know whether the immigrant population, which had grown substantially within one generation (para. 10), was spread throughout the territory of the country and whether it was endeavouring to become integrated with the population of Norwegian origin. Did it prefer to live in its own neighbourhoods?

30. Concerning the sections of the report relating to the implementation of article 3 of the Convention, he wished, like Mr. Welfrum, to draw the attention of the Norwegian Delegation to the Committee's general recommendation XIX. He was pleased to note from paragraph 17 of the report that government policy concerning the elimination of racial discrimination was aimed at achieving genuine equal status between persons of immigrant origin and Norwegians. According to paragraph 140, moreover, foreign nationals residing in Norway for a period of three years had the right to participate in local elections, being able both to vote and to stand for election, on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. It further appeared that about 90,000 foreign nationals had acquired the right to participate in local elections. He therefore wondered how many immigrants and non-nationals had actually exercised that right and what results had been obtained by the immigrants who had participated for the first time in elections by submitting their own list of candidates. How many of them had been elected? Also, were immigrants represented in the higher administrative bodies and in the executive and legislative organs?

31. He would like to know whether the situation in the public sector duly reflected the fact that Norway was a multicultural society. How was the Norwegian Government endeavouring to ensure the integration of minorities in the public sector without resorting to a system of quotas?

32. Since, according to paragraph 23 of the fourteenth report (CERD/C/320/Add.1), the Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo had stated that 104 incidents attributable to extreme right-wing activities had been reported in 1996, it would be useful for the Committee to have some information about the nature of those extremist groups and their objectives. In relation to his previous question concerning the distribution of the population of immigrant

origin, he would like to know why the acts of violence committed by extreme right-wing groups were confined to specific municipalities or urban neighbourhoods.

13. Referring to a report in which the Anti-Racist Centre had suggested that the Norwegian Government should improve its relations and dialogue with the Centre, he requested the delegation to indicate to the Committee how the Government proceeded in drawing up its periodic reports. Did representatives of the minorities participate in that exercise? It would also be useful for the Committee to know what steps the Norwegian Government was taking to publicize its periodic reports and to make the Committee's conclusions on those reports widely available. The Committee should note with satisfaction, at the appropriate time, that the Norwegian Government had promptly ratified the amendment to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention and that it had made the declaration provided for in article 14.

14. Mr. van ROYEN said he was pleased to note that the Norwegian Government appeared to have taken account, in its frank and informative report, of most of the recommendations and suggestions made to it by the Committee during the consideration of Norway's previous reports. He was also pleased to see that various bodies and NGOs had been involved in the preparation of the report.

15. Concerning the implementation of article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention, he noted with interest the measures taken to ensure the advancement and protection of certain minority groups, such as the Sami, the Roma and the Even, and also of immigrant women and refugee children or children of immigrant origin.

16. Regarding the implementation of article 4, he welcomed the decision, referred to in paragraph 117 of the report, to carry out a survey of prosecution practices related to sections 135 (a) and 149 (a) of the Penal Code, concerning racial discrimination, and hoped that the survey results would be communicated to the Committee in a later periodic report. However, he was concerned about reports from the Anti-Racist Centre that the Norwegian police were reluctant to follow up complaints of violations of these sections of the Penal Code. It was desirable for the authorities to make sure that the police were more vigilant and active when such violations were reported to them.

17. With regard to the information provided in paragraph 115 on the implementation of article 5, he pointed out that during its consideration of communication No. 1/1991, submitted under article 14, the Committee had invited Norway to do everything possible to ensure that justice was not denied by racial prejudice and to guarantee the impartiality of jurors in accordance with the principle set forth in article 5 (a) of the Convention. The case in question showed that the procedure provided for in article 14 could lead to institutional improvements in the country concerned, and he asked whether the directives issued by the Ministry of Justice, as mentioned in paragraph 135, had in fact been formulated pursuant to the Committee's recommendations concerning that communication.

18. Concerning the implementation of article 5 in the field of employment, the fact that unemployment affected 25 per cent of members of the minorities,

As against only 4 per cent of the majority population, suggested to him that the measures referred to in paragraph 150 were probably insufficient and that new arrangements would have to be instituted, including special measures under article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention.

19. As members of ethnic minorities were victims of discriminatory practices by real-estate agents which violated their right to housing, he wished to point out that the provisions of the Convention proscribing racial discrimination applied not only to the public sector but also to activities in the private sector. In that regard, it would be useful to know what progress had been made with the legislation being considered (para. 164) to prohibit racial discrimination in connection with the renting or purchasing of a dwelling.

20. Since the right of access to any place intended for use by the public guaranteed by article 3 (f), was not ensured in the case of immigrants and non-whites in general, he was concerned by the attitude of the police, which had appeared reluctant to carry out their own investigations when confronted with the overwhelming evidence of an inquiry on racial discrimination in public places conducted by the Anti-Racist Centre, journalists and an official of the Ministry of Justice. He would also like to know whether, besides criminal proceedings, victims of acts of racist violence such as those referred to in paragraph 122 could bring a civil action for compensation.

21. Mr. de Winter congratulated the Norwegian delegation on the regularity with which Norway's periodic reports were submitted and emphasized that Norway was one of the few countries that had made the declaration provided for in article 14.

22. Thanks to the great frankness of the reports under consideration, the Committee could form quite an accurate picture of racial discrimination in Norway. The situation, however, seemed quite disturbing in that regard. He noted in particular that the majority of the Norwegian electorate was hostile to immigrants, that there were small anti-immigrant organizations which often had links with neo-Nazi organizations and that the extreme right-wing organizations were very active; furthermore, immigrants were subjected to physical aggression and were victims of discriminatory behaviour by some agents of the State. An article in the newspaper Le Monde, dated 12 August 1997, had spoken of the Progress Party's overt hostility towards indigenous people. That extreme right-wing party believed, for example, that the precedent of the Sami Assembly could nurture similar ambitions among other ethnic groups, and it disapproved of the financial aid provided to the Lapps. The views of the Progress Party, which was set to become the country's second main party, had nevertheless not been condemned by the other parties. What did the Norwegian delegation think of that situation?

23. At the same time, it was gratifying that many positive steps had been taken to combat racial discrimination, including the Brumunddal Plan of Action, the human rights training programme for the police and the army, the Liaison Committee between immigrants and the Norwegian Authorities (KIM), the programme set out in the White Paper and the involvement of NGOs in the

preparation of the periodic reports. He noted, however, that the Anti-Racist Centre wished to see an improvement in cooperation between the State, NGOs and the minorities.

44. He hoped that a first assessment of the programme defined in the White Paper could be provided in the next periodic report. He would like to know what progress had been made by the advisory team to combat racial violence and harassment (para. 41 of the report). How was that team constituted and what resources were available to it? In addition, what had been the results of the survey initiated by the Director-General of Public Prosecutions (para. 117)? Were information would be welcome concerning the leader of a political party who had engaged in racial discrimination (para. 120). Which party was involved, and had the case been heard by the Supreme Court? Lastly, he would like the delegation to indicate whether the bill aimed at prohibiting racial discrimination in housing had been passed and what stage had been reached in the study by the Ministry of Local Government and Labour concerning the possible creation of a national institution against racism and racial discrimination (para. 182).

45. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ noted that the Norwegian Government had submitted a White Paper on Immigration and a Multicultural Norway. He agreed with the Government that racism could not be regarded as a phenomenon independent of other problems in society and that an effective welfare policy embracing every segment of society and aimed at affording equal opportunities for all was perhaps the best way of combating racism and xenophobia.

46. According to the thirteenth report, manifestations of racial discrimination in Norway occurred mostly in the form of denial of goods and services and negative attitudes in the streets, workplaces or schools and in the housing market. What steps were being taken to remedy the situation? It appeared from the reports under consideration that the Norwegian population was somewhat hostile to immigrants and refugees. For example, immigrants, particularly those from Africa, Asia and Latin America, had reported discriminatory behaviour on the part of some representatives of the public authorities and complained of being checked more often and more thoroughly than others at immigration and customs checkpoints. What had been the findings of the survey conducted by the Ministry of Justice to examine the way controls of foreign nationals were carried out by the police?

47. He would like more information about the current arrangements for recognizing diplomas and professional experience acquired abroad, as well as about the legislation now under consideration to prohibit racial discrimination in connection with the renting or purchasing of a dwelling. He would also like to have more details about the detention of foreign nationals, as mentioned in paragraph 88 of the thirteenth report and paragraph 11 of the fourteenth report.

the results of the survey which the Director-General of Public Prosecutions had requested all public prosecutors to undertake concerning prosecution practices related to racially-motivated crimes. Regarding the case of the leader of a political party who had recently been convicted by the Oslo City Court on the charge that his party's programme encouraged racial discrimination, he would like to know the outcome of the convicted person's appeal to the Supreme Court.

49. Concerning the Sami, the Roma and the Finno-ethnic groups, which in many areas were not on an equal footing with the rest of the population, he encouraged the Government to redouble efforts to ensure that the Sami language was fully used in all public and administrative proceedings and that Sami culture and traditions were safeguarded. He also urged the Government to make sure that, both in law and in practice, the Roma and the Finno-ethnic population had access to employment and education under the same conditions as the rest of the population.

50. Mr. DIACONE observed that there were some disparities between the various demographic data contained in the report and hoped that the Government would present these data in consolidated form in its next periodic report.

51. It was gratifying to note that legislative and administrative measures were being taken by the Government to combat racial discrimination and that civil society too was making efforts in that direction. However, it appeared from a study published in 1995 that the majority of the Norwegian electorate saw immigrants as posing a threat to Norwegian culture. Furthermore, several organizations representing Africans living in Norway had complained about the fact that the National Board of Health had portrayed Africans as the largest risk factor in the heterosexual spread of the HIV virus in Norway. Nevertheless, new projects were being considered to improve HIV/AIDS prevention among Africans and other ethnic groups, and those projects were to be welcomed.

52. The Government should show vigilance concerning xenophobic attitudes, even if, according to the report, the situation had not worsened in recent years. Norway had a number of small anti-immigrant organizations and there was a radio station in Oslo broadcasting programmes hostile to foreigners. The Parliament had before it a Progress Party white paper affirming that immigrants contributed to increased crime and were a source of problems for Norwegians. The Parliament had, indeed, found it appropriate to call for a study on expenditures for the hosting of immigrants. It could equally well have looked at the economic advantages that immigration brought to Norway. Under article 4 of the Convention, States parties undertook to declare illegal and prohibit organizations which incited racial discrimination.

53. He welcomed the amendment to section 3 of the Immigration Act providing that foreign nationals during their legal stay in Norway had the same rights

54. In conclusion, he was convinced that Norwegian society, with its characteristic dynamism, should be able to overcome the problems connected with immigration and ensure the full implementation of the Convention.

55. Mr. YUTZIS said it was regrettable that the Committee did not have enough time for an in-depth consideration of Norway's fourteenth report. He commended the Government on the measures it had taken to combat racial discrimination and also welcomed the conclusions of the report prepared within the framework of the Brumunddal Plan of Action, which emphasized the need to mobilize the population to combat racism. Lastly, he noted that the Norwegian Press Association had adopted a code of ethics which would facilitate the examination of complaints made against the press.

56. He felt, however, that the lack of statistical information on the ethnic minorities prevented the Norwegian Government from determining clearly the causes of racial discrimination. The Government itself recognized that a survey and an analysis of the problem should be undertaken (para. 38 of the thirteenth report), and that there was no registration in Norway based on ethnicity and that no statistics were available regarding the living conditions of the Roma in Norway (para. 104 of the same report).

57. He was disturbed that racist and xenophobic tendencies appeared to be on the increase in Norway. That was visible, for example, in the public debate on Norway's policy of integration, which was heavily criticized by some segments of the population, which believed that immigrants represented a threat to Norwegian culture. That debate, although allowing for the frank expression of opinions, did not seem to have generated any constructive criticism to help in devising a satisfactory policy for the population as a whole. Like Mr. Diaconu, he was very concerned about the news that a public body, the National Board of Health, had reportedly portrayed Africans as the largest risk factor in the heterosexual spread of the HIV virus in Norway.

58. According to the thirteenth report, the high rate of unemployment among immigrants could be explained by lack of knowledge of the Norwegian language. However, paragraph 14 of the fourteenth report stated that the Norwegian Government favoured active recruitment of qualified persons with an immigrant background in the public sector, but was not in favour of establishing quotas whereby individuals, for example on ethnic or language criteria, would be appointed to positions instead of others with better qualifications. He would like to know whether the Government intended to take steps to redress that situation, which represented a vicious circle. He asked why one radio station continued to be allowed to broadcast anti-immigrant programmes. Was there no code of ethics which could be applied in that case?

59. He would like to know more about the information system used by the armed forces to prevent discrimination. He welcomed the fact that the Government recommended the use of mediation boards for conflicts which arose

discrimination and noted with interest the activities of the Interdisciplinary Advisory Group on Community Relations and Anti-Racist Work, as well as those of the Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo. He asked what measures were envisaged by the authorities to follow up on the Centre's annual report, in particular with regard to combating acts of violence, the destruction of property and propaganda. He noted with satisfaction that the objective of a survey among foreign citizens conducted by Statistics Norway in 1993 had been to contrast differences in the standard of living among persons of immigrant origin and the majority population and to describe the process of social integration of immigrants over time. He commended Norway for taking account in its cultural policy of the fact that the country had become a multicultural society, and asked for more information on that policy.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.